

§ 256.67

§ 256.67 Separate filings for assignments.

A separate instrument of assignment shall be filed for each lease. When transfers to the same person, association or corporation, involving more than one lease are filed at the same time for approval, one request for approval and one showing as to the qualifications of the assignee shall be sufficient.

§ 256.68 Effect of assignment of a particular tract.

(a) When an assignment is made of all the record title to a portion of the acreage in a lease, the assigned and retained portions become segregated into separate and distinct leases. In such a case, the assignee becomes a lessee of the Government as to the segregated tract that is the subject of assignment, and is bound by the terms of the lease as though the lease had been obtained from the United States in the assignee's own name, and the assignment, after its approval, shall be the basis of a new record. Royalty, minimum royalty and rental provisions of the original lease shall apply separately to each segregated portion.

(b) For assignments of a portion of an oil and gas lease approved after the effective date of this section, each segregated lease shall continue in full force and effect for the primary term of the original lease and so long thereafter as oil or gas is produced from that segregated portion of the leased area in paying quantities or drilling or well reworking operations as approved by the Secretary are conducted.

(c) For those assignments approved prior to the effective date of this section, each segregated lease shall continue in full force and effect for the primary term of the original lease and so long thereafter as oil and gas may be produced from the original leased area in paying quantities or drilling or well reworking operations, as approved by the Secretary, are conducted.

§ 256.70 Extension of lease by drilling or well reworking operations.

The term of a lease shall be extended beyond the primary term so long as drilling or well reworking operations are approved by the Secretary accord-

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ing to the conditions set forth in 30 CFR 250.180.

[44 FR 38276, June 29, 1979, as amended at 55 FR 32908, Aug. 13, 1990; 64 FR 9066, Feb. 24, 1999; 64 FR 72795, Dec. 28, 1999]

§ 256.71 Directional drilling.

In accordance with an approved exploration plan or development and production plan, a lease may be maintained in force by directional wells drilled under the leased area from surface locations on adjacent or adjoining land not covered by the lease. In such circumstances, drilling shall be considered to have commenced on the leased area when drilling is commenced on the adjacent or adjoining land for the purpose of directional drilling under the leased area through any directional well surfaced on adjacent or adjoining land. Production, drilling or reworking of any such directional well shall be considered production or drilling or reworking operations on the leased area for all purposes of the lease.

§ 256.72 Compensatory payments as production.

If an oil and gas lessee makes compensatory payments and if the lease is not being maintained in force by other production of oil or gas in paying quantities or by other approved drilling or reworking operations, such payments shall be considered as the equivalent of production in paying quantities for all purposes of the lease.

[44 FR 38276, June 29, 1979. Redesignated at 47 FR 47006, Oct. 22, 1982, and amended at 54 FR 50617, Dec. 8, 1989]

§ 256.73 Effect of suspensions on lease term.

(a) A suspension may extend the term of a lease (see 30 CFR 250.171) with the extension being the length of time the suspension is in effect except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section.

(b) A Directed Suspension does not extend the lease term when the Regional Supervisor directs a suspension because of:

(1) Gross negligence; or (2) A willful violation of a provision of the lease or governing regulations.

(c) MMS may issue suspensions for a period of up to 5 years per suspension.

The Regional Supervisor will set the length of the suspension based on the conditions of the individual case involved. MMS may grant consecutive suspensions. For more information on suspension of operations or production refer to the section under the heading "Suspensions" in 30 CFR part 250, subpart A.

[64 FR 72795, Dec. 28, 1999]

Subpart K—Termination of Leases

§ 256.76 Relinquishment of leases or parts of leases.

A lease or any officially designated subdivision thereof may be surrendered by the record title holder by filing a written relinquishment, in triplicate, with the appropriate OCS office of the MMS. No filing fee is required. A relinquishment shall take effect on the date it is filed subject to the continued obligation of the lessee and the surety to make all payments due, including any accrued rentals, royalties and deferred bonuses and to abandon all wells and condition or remove all platforms and other facilities on the land to be relinquished to the satisfaction of the Director.

§ 256.77 Cancellation of leases.

(a) Any nonproducing lease issued under the act may be cancelled by the authorized officer whenever the lessee fails to comply with any provision of the act or lease or applicable regulations, if such failure to comply continues for 30 days after mailing of notice by registered or certified letter to the lease owner at the owner's record post office address. Any such cancellation is subject to judicial review as provided in section 23(b) of the Act.

(b) Producing leases issued under the Act may be cancelled by the Secretary whenever the lessee fails to comply with any provision of the Act, applicable regulations or the lease only after judicial proceedings as prescribed by section 5(d) of the Act.

(c) Any lease issued under the Act, whether producing or not, shall be canceled by the authorized officer upon proof that it was obtained by fraud or misrepresentation, and after notice and

opportunity to be heard has been afforded to the lessee.

(d) Pursuant to section 5(a) of the Act, the Secretary may cancel a lease when:

(1) Continued activity pursuant to such lease would probably cause serious harm or damage to life, property, any mineral, national security or defense, or to the marine, coastal or human environment;

(2) The threat of harm or damage will not disappear or decrease to an acceptable extent within a reasonable period of time; and

(3) The advantages of cancellation outweigh the advantages of continuing such lease or permit in force. Procedures and conditions contained in 30 CFR 250.182 shall apply as appropriate.

[44 FR 38276, June 29, 1979; 44 FR 55380, Sept. 26, 1979. Redesignated at 47 FR 47006, Oct. 22, 1982; 64 FR 13343, Mar. 18, 1999; 64 FR 72795, Dec. 28, 1999]

Subpart L—Section 6 Leases

§ 256.79 Effect of regulations on lease.

(a) All regulations in this part, insofar as they are applicable, shall supersede the provisions of any lease which is maintained under section 6(a) of the Act. However, the provisions of a lease relating to area, minerals, rentals, royalties (subject to sections 6(a) (8) and (9) of the Act), and term (subject to section 6(a)(10) of the Act and, as to sulfur, subject to section 6(b)(2) of the Act) shall continue in effect, and, in the event of any conflict or inconsistency, shall take precedence over these regulations.

(b) A lease maintained under section 6(a) of the Act shall also be subject to all operating and conservation regulations applicable to the OCS. In addition, the regulations relating to geophysical and geological exploratory operations and to pipeline rights-of-way are applicable, to the extent that those regulations are not contrary to or inconsistent with the lease provisions relating to area, the minerals, rentals, royalties and term. The lessee shall comply with any provision of the lease as validated, the subject matter of